President’s Letter - continued

Dear Friends & Members,

The Lincoln Bicentennial is now history, and it was a great year for Lincoln studies. Between the new books, public programs, and television documentaries, it was a spectacular celebration.

With the recent passing of our Vice President Hans Trefousse and the 2007 loss of Dr. John Lattimer, some of our most important leaders have now passed into history. They both lived outstanding lives and made their mark in the world of history.

At our March meeting, the executive committee will convene to among other responsibilities, select a winner of the Lincoln Group of New York’s 2009 Award of Achievement for the best Lincoln work of the year. We will honor Dr. White and present him with the Award at our first meeting in 2010. White is the author of two previously acclaimed Lincoln books, The Eloquent President, and Lincoln’s Greatest Speech.

The Award Committee in this, the recently concluded bicentennial year of Lincoln’s birth, felt it was extremely important that it confer the Award of Achievement on a work that delivers a comprehensive study of Lincoln to the public at large, a work that has broad reach and mass appeal, that also is of scholarly esteem. Ultimately, to select the work that does the most to encourage the study and appreciation of Abraham Lincoln—this is the committee’s mission. The committee agreed that this book is not only the best one-volume Lincoln biography since David Herbert Donald’s Lincoln, but importantly, is also extremely accessible and readable by the general public and scholars alike. As Professor Michael Gray of the Award Committee stated, “White’s painstaking research and enjoyable pen allows the reader to get a glimpse into the 16th president’s life heretofore unknown to scholars, and sure to be utilized by future historians.”

What separates A. Lincoln from other biographies is that Lincoln’s evolving intellect, through analysis of his words, is the keystone of White’s work. He uses what Lincoln read, wrote, and said, to show this growth and development. This synthesis and analysis of Lincoln’s thoughts and words help to make White’s biography unique. In addition, as Award Committee member Joseph Truglio said, White “presented a side of Lincoln rarely seen, his spiritual side.” The political, personal, and moral Lincoln are all on display here as readers will come away from this wonderfully written book with a much greater understanding of the foundations of Lincoln’s thought process and ultimately of Lincoln the man.

The Award Committee was comprised of Steven R. Koppelman, Chair, Dr. Michael Gray, and Joseph Truglio.

Those who cast their votes in the Award Committee all agree that Ronald C. White has produced the best Lincoln biography since David Herbert Donald’s. In his new book A. Lincoln, White delves deeply into Lincoln’s life through sources that have never been discovered before, and provides us with the rarest glimpse into the man who changed the course of history. The book is a work of art, as White has given us the gift of Lincoln’s words straight to our minds and hearts.

Thank you in advance, for anything you can contribute.

Ronald C. White Award - continued

President Joseph E. Garrera is encouraged to do so by calling (484) 553-2592 evenings between 7:00 - 9:00 P.M. EST.

Sincerely,

Joseph Garrera
President
**2009 Meetings Review**

**In 2009 the Meetings of The Lincoln Group of New York provided a very eclectic look at the life and times of our 16th President as we celebrated the bicentennial of his birth.**

**February 17, 2009**
The Lincoln Bicentennial year got off to a rousing start in New York as professor Barry Schwartz lectured on Lincoln’s place in history over the past 100 years, emphasizing America’s general lessening of the “Great Man” view of history. Drawing on charts and data presented in his book, Abraham Lincoln in the Post-Heroic Era, Schwartz presented information that while not all were necessarily in agreement with, provided much fodder for thought and passionate discussion.

**April 21, 2009**
One of those often quoted phrases that no one really seems to know the origin of, is the following: “behind every strong man there’s a strong woman.” This may or may not truly be the case, it certainly is arguable, and so too was the subject of Catherine Clinton’s new book and lecture for this meeting, Mary Todd Lincoln or simply Mrs. Lincoln as Clinton refers to her in her book’s title Mrs. Lincoln: A Life.

Certainly, the subject of Mary Lincoln is one that sparks conflicting emotions in many people. Professor Clinton made a very strong case that perhaps we don’t know the real Mary. In presenting a balanced portrayal of the various controversies surrounding Mrs. Lincoln’s life, Professor Clinton provided her audience with much to ponder and much to debate.

**December 1, 2009**
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Those who arrived early this evening also enjoyed the wonderful exhibition of The Lincoln Group of New York Historical Society, Lincoln and New York (see page 3 for article on the exhibition). Harold Holzer is the Chief Historian for the exhibition; it closes on March 25, 2010 so there is still time to see it.

**FEBRUARY 2010 A PUBLICATION OF THE LINCOLN GROUP OF NEW YORK PAGE 5**

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**In Memoriam**

David Herbert Donald

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A professor emeritus at Harvard University, Donald won Pulitzer Prizes for his biographies of abolitionist Charles Sumner and novelist Thomas Wolfe. However, his books on Lincoln, most especially his 1995 biography, Lincoln, are what positioned him as one of the nation’s preeminent Lincoln scholars. His other Lincoln related books include Lincoln’s Vindication, a biography of Lincoln’s law partner, Lincoln at Home, a study of his family life, and We Are Lincoln Men, essays about Lincoln’s friends and associates.

Donald, an honorary member of The Lincoln Group of New York, last addressed the Group on November 11, 2003. He was a distinguished historian and a true gentleman; we will miss him greatly.

**Merrill D. Peterson**

Merrill D. Peterson, 88, died September 23, 2009 at a retirement home in Charlottesville Virginia. Perhaps best known for his work on Thomas Jefferson including his 1979 biography Jefferson and the New Nation, his 1994 study on Lincoln, Lincoln in American Memory, placed him extremely high in the world of Lincoln scholarship. This work explored how generations of Americans have viewed Lincoln in thought and imagination. At the time, Richard N. Current called it “a comprehensive, keenly perceptive, and highly readable history of Lincoln’s reputation.”

In 1999 interview with National Public Radio, Peterson comparing the Lincoln Memorial in Washington DC to the Jefferson Memorial stated the following, “I’m always dumbfounded by the power of the Lincoln Memorial,” he said. “I have great admiration for the Jefferson Memorial... But it does not move me by the power of the Lincoln Memorial, and that’s, you see, the difference about Lincoln. Lincoln brings up chokes in the throat or maybe even tears to the eyes.”

**Professor Hans Trefousse**

by Joseph Garrera

It is with sadness that I report the death of The Lincoln Group of New York Vice President, Hans L. Trefousse, who died at his Long Island home on Friday, January 8, 2010.

Hans was a remarkable man who lived a fruitful and historic life. To LGNY members Hans was a distinguished Professor of History Emeritus of the City University of New York, his academic career covered the years 1950 to his retirement in 1998. Hans had written or edited more than twelve books on Lincoln and his the landmark study, The Radical Republicans: Lincoln’s Vanguard for Radical Justice published in 1969 by Alfred A. Knopf. Hans also wrote important biographies on several of the Radical Republicans including Thaddeus Stevens, Benjamin F. Butler and Carl Schurz.

His success in life went far beyond the academic world. During the Second World War, he served overseas from 1941 to 1946. During an enemy attack, he was wounded and bleeding from an exploding hand grenade. Needing medical attention a jeep pulled up with the civilian driver yelling “get in, I’ll take you to the infirmary” – the driver was war correspondent, and famous writer Ernest Hemingway.

Well into his 80’s Hans remained active, leading a robust life, always remembering and appreciating his friends. Twelve years ago, Hans introduced me to one of his dear friends, Professor Arthur Schlesinger. From the start, Schlesinger became my friend with whom I met with a number of times. Schlesinger frequently spoke of Hans as “a great scholar with a clear mind and an eye for true research.”

I recall in 1995 when David Herbert Donald made one of his famous visits as our speaker in New York, preparing to speak, Professor Donald paid high honor to Hans stating, “He knows far more about Lincoln than I do, but as your speaker, I’ll do my best.”

Hans was a compassionate human being, kind and generous to everyone. In 1999, his wife of 53 years Rashelle Friedlander Trefousse, Ph.D. died of cancer. Hans never recovered from this loss. He spoke of Rashelle often and with great tenderness.

When I was out to dinner with Hans on Long Island a few years back, he told me that after Rashelle died, he could not bear to eat dinner alone without her, so he went out for dinner every night with friends and colleagues.

We say goodbye to Hans now, our friend, our colleague, and our mentor. However, we can find solace in knowing that Hans is home with Rashelle. He is once again, reunited with the person who made his life complete and happy.

Hans now lives in Lincoln literature. His books, his articles, and scholarship will endure far into the future.
Common Cents

In the diary of Lincoln’s secretary, John Hay, Hay quotes Lincoln as stating, “Common looking people are the best in the world: that is the reason the Lord makes so many of them.” This comment was Lincoln’s reply, in a dream he had, in which normal people expected to see them when they look at it.

There is no more common coin than the penny but to some degree, the penny in 2009 and now 2010 has become uncommon, at least in terms of what people expect to see when they look at it.

The Lincoln penny, originally designed in 1909, contained a very simple design on its reverse: two stalks of wheat on the outer edges with the words One Cent, and United States of America between, and E Pluribus Unum (meaning one out of many) on the upper edge. This design lasted for fifty years, until the U.S. Mint changed it as part of Lincoln’s 150th birthday celebration, to become the more familiar Lincoln Memorial reverse. This then became the standard for another fifty years, until the bicentennial of Lincoln’s birth, when the U.S. Mint introduced four different reverse designs. The mint created these designs to trace the progression of Lincoln’s life.

The first one, reflecting his days in Kentucky features the log cabin where Lincoln was born (near Hodgenville). The second design represented his Indiana years and it features the young Lincoln as a rail-splitter, taken from a break in his manual labor in order to read a book. The third, the Illinois penny, reflects Lincoln’s work as a state legislator as he appears standing in front of the Old State Capitol building. The final design has an image of the unfinished U.S. Capitol dome, which connotes that though the Civil War was tearing the nation apart, Lincoln worked to bring it back together.

Now, 2010 marks a brand new reverse design for the common penny, one that I suspect among the plethora of common pennies that we see every day. As so many of the 2009 designs around and though there will be plenty of “Union Shield” designs around soon, it is currently unique amongst the plethora of common pennies that we see every day. As Lincoln was a unique example of the “common man” so are these new pennies unique examples of the most common of coins.

The symbolism here is of the original thirteen colonies coming together to form our union. Also showing on the new design as “United States of America” across the upper edge and “One Cent” in a scroll design that covers the lower part of the shield.

Originally, there were 18 potential designs proposed for the new reverse of the 2010 penny. They all essentially included similar themes that included the United States Capitol building, the American flag, various shield designs, an eagle, and the wheat stalks reminiscent of the 1909 design.

It is altogether fitting and proper that the penny continues to depict Lincoln. While there are so many of them, there are not so many of the 2009 designs around and though there will be plenty of “Union Shield” designs around soon, it is currently unique amongst the plethora of common pennies that we see every day. As Lincoln was a unique example of the “common man” so are these new pennies unique examples of the most common of coins.

Lincoln and New York

The Exhibition

On October 9, 2009, The New-York Historical Society launched a groundbreaking interpretive exhibition, Lincoln and New York, which explores, for the first time, the significant historic ties between Abraham Lincoln and New York. Lincoln owed much of his political success to how he affected the state of New York and how it affected him. This becomes exceedingly clear in the exhibition as the influence the city had on the man and the man on the city, is fully explored. Co-Chairman of the Lincoln U.S. Bicentennial Commission, Harold Holzer, is the Chief Historian for the exhibition, which runs through March 25, 2010.

The Executive Committee of The Lincoln Group of New York had the opportunity to attend the Preview and Reception for the exhibition on the evening of October 8. The exhibition essentially begins with Lincoln’s February 1860 Cooper Union address and ends with his New York funeral procession when 150,000 mourners lined Broadway to see him lie in state in City Hall. In between these two colossal events, significant aspects of Lincoln—his political skill, his compassion, his determination to end slavery, are all on display in multi-media formats. In addition, the anti-Lincoln Democratic Copperheads are heard from in the exhibition, providing a very balanced and nuanced look at the passions of the period.

Highlights include the lectern that Lincoln stood at and used during his Cooper Union address, an actual Wide Awake torch used in a torch-light parade through the streets of New York, a genuine draft lottery wheel, and most hauntingly, the actual uniform jacket (with bullet hole) worn by Lincoln’s friend Elmer Ellsworth when he was fatally shot on May 24, 1861 in Alexandria Virginia. Perhaps most impressive though, Lincoln’s actual hand written letter to Horace Greeley, from August 22, 1862 in response to Greeley’s article titled, “The Prayer of Twenty Millions” is on display. The letter is most famous for the following quote, but note that Lincoln had already prepared a draft copy of the Emancipation Proclamation—he was waiting for the proper time to issue it: “My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or to destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that.”
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Now, 2010 marks a brand new reverse design for the common penny, one that I suspect we will see until the 250th anniversary of Lincoln’s birth. Released in Springfield Illinois in February, the “Union Shield” penny will now be the design going forward. This was a common symbol during the civil war era, as Indian head pennies minted during that time included union shields. This shield depicts thirteen vertical stripes with a horizontal bar on top that reads “E PLURIBUS UNUM.” The symbolism here is of the original thirteen colonies coming together to form our union. Also showing on the new design is “United States of America” across the upper edge and “One Cent” in a scroll design that covers the lower part of the shield.

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With the recent passing of our Vice President Hans Trefousse and the 2007 loss of Dr. John Lattimer, some of our most important leaders have now passed into history. They both lived outstanding lives and made their mark in the world of history.

At our March meeting, the executive committee will convene to among other responsibilities, select a recipient of the Ronald C. White Award—continued

Ronald C. White Award - continued

A special thanks to our dedicated members that serve on the award committee.

Steven R. Koppelman, Chair • Dr. Michael Gray • Joseph A. Truglio

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President’s Letter - continued

new president of The Lincoln Group of New York. When I was elected president eleven years ago I had always hoped to remain in office until the Bicentennial was past. Now that we have passed that milestone, it is time for me to step aside and allow someone new to take over and lead our organization into the new decade.

Everyone has always been so kind and gracious to me. Our executive committee represents some of the finest people I have ever known. I’m eager to see whom they nominate as your next president. I am absolutely certain their choice will be outstanding. I look forward to greeting everyone on March 3rd.

Sincerely,
Joseph Garrera
President

Thank you, in advance, for anything you can contribute.

ATTENTION MEMBERS: YOUR GENEROUS HELP IS REQUESTED...

As you’re certainly aware, one of our most popular Lincoln Group of New York meeting events is the book raffle. What you might not know is that our members donate all of the books. That’s where your help is needed. To keep this raffle going with high quality Lincoln publications, we respectfully request that if you have any books that you can spare for the raffle, simply bring them to the meeting and see one of our Executive Committee members to ensure that they’re included in that night’s raffle.

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Lincoln & Civil War event photos & albums can be viewed at: http://homepage.mac.com/civilwar

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What separates A. Lincoln from other biographies is that Lincoln’s evolving intellect, through analysis of his words, is the keystone of White’s work. He uses what Lincoln read, wrote, and said, to show this growth and development. This synthesis and analysis of Lincoln’s thoughts and words help to make White’s biography unique. In addition, as Award Committee member Joseph Truglio said, White “presented a side of Lincoln rarely seen, his spiritual side.” The political, personal, and moral Lincoln are all on display here as readers will come away from this wonderfully written book with a much greater understanding of the foundations of Lincoln’s thought process and ultimately of Lincoln the man.

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President’s Letter - continued

new president of The Lincoln Group of New York. When I was elected president eleven years ago I had always hoped to remain in office until the Bicentennial was past. Now that we have passed that milestone, it is time for me to step aside and allow someone new to take over and lead our organization into the new decade.

Everyone has always been so kind and gracious to me. Our executive committee represents some of the finest people I have ever known. I’m eager to see whom they nominate as your next president. I am absolutely certain their choice will be outstanding. I look forward to greeting everyone on March 3rd.

Sincerely,
Joseph Garrera
President

Thank you, in advance, for anything you can contribute.

ATTENTION MEMBERS: YOUR GENEROUS HELP IS REQUESTED...

As you’re certainly aware, one of our most popular Lincoln Group of New York meeting events is the book raffle. What you might not know is that our members donate all of the books. That’s where your help is needed. To keep this raffle going with high quality Lincoln publications, we respectfully request that if you have any books that you can spare for the raffle, simply bring them to the meeting and see one of our Executive Committee members to ensure that they’re included in that night’s raffle.

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Lincoln & Civil War event photos & albums can be viewed at: http://homepage.mac.com/civilwar

Note: Member ideas and opinions are very important. Anyone wishing to speak with Lincoln Group of New York president Joseph E. Garrera is encouraged to do so by calling (484) 553-2592 evenings between 7:00 - 9:00 P.M. E.S.T.

The Lincoln Bicentennial is now history, and it was a great year for Lincoln studies. Between the new books, public programs, and television documentaries, it was a spectacular celebration.

With the recent passing of our Vice President Hans Trefousse and the 2007 loss of Dr. John Lattimer, some of our most important leaders have now passed into history. They both lived outstanding lives and made their mark in the world of history.

At our March meeting, the executive committee will convene to among other responsibilities, select a recipient of the Ronald C. White Award—continued

Ronald C. White Award - continued

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